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THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

VOL. XVIII

JANUARY, 1918

No. 4

EDITORIAL COMMENT

ARE WE SLACKERS?

Appeals are being made constantly from Red Cross headquarters for the enrollment of nurses for home service. The situation is rendered difficult for the reason that nurses who are enrolled in Base Hospitals are being held back to some extent, for foreign service, while many others are failing to respond because they are hoping for a chance to go abroad and desire to do that rather than volunteer for service in the cantonments in their own country.

The waiving of one of the requirements for enrollment in the Red Cross, that of membership in the American Nurses' Association, will make large numbers of nurses eligible who have been debarred up to this time. It will be remembered that as long ago as the time of the Minneapolis convention, in 1909, when the affiliation of the American Nurses' Association with the Red Cross was under consideration, the Association assumed the responsibility of providing the nursing service for the Red Cross, and in the working out of this affiliation, enrollment in the nursing service of the Red Cross has been limited to those nurses who were members of the American Nurses' Association through membership in their alumnae, city or state societies.

During this war period, membership in the American Nurses' Association is waived, but state registration, where it exists, is still required.

One reason given by nurses of all ages for not enrolling is that their families object to their serving. We want to say that if any woman is old enough to be out in the world supporting herself and perhaps helping her family, she is old enough to decide such questions for herself.

We wish to call the attention of our readers, again, to Miss Delano's report in the last issue of the JOURNAL, which showed that during this war period the age limit is abolished so that older women who are in vigorous health may be enrolled for home service. It is going to be possible, also, for nurses from the smaller hospitals to be recognized under certain conditions.

Returns which are coming in from the survey of nursing resources being made throughout the country, show that a comparatively small proportion of the registered nurses, in the twenty states that have reported, are enrolled with the Red Cross. The percentages vary from $1\frac{3}{4}$, which is the lowest received, through 7 and 8, which are the most common, to 32 and 41, the last being to the credit of the District of Columbia.

It is very evident that one of the war-time economies being practised in numberless homes, perhaps as a result of the Home Nursing classes, is that women are taking care of their own sick in cases of moderate illness. Fifty per cent of the nurses of the country should be enrolled for Red Cross service. This would leave, we believe, a sufficient number to meet the need for cases of serious illness. It is not a credit to the profession that Miss Noyes has to leave her important position in Washington and travel over the country to stimulate enrollment.

There is no reason why, if nurses will wake up to their responsibility, the nursing situation both here and abroad should not be met with perfect ease. We know from our own community and from reports from other cities, that there never was a time when there were greater numbers of idle nurses.

Do not let it go down in history that when the young men of our country were called into service in defense of the democracy of the world, the nurses held back, because of financial reasons or because they shrink from the hardships of war service.

ADVANCE STEPS IN NURSING EDUCATION

We have already commented upon the decided effect of the appeals coming from the Committee on Nursing to the high school and college graduates in increasing the number of applicants for nurse training schools. The latest bulletin of this kind to come to our notice is a circular being issued by the Education Department at Albany, N. Y., and sent to high school principals, with the request that it be read to the pupils and placed on the bulletin boards, which reviews the nursing situation in relation to the war and emphasizes the points that a young woman should consider in choosing a school of nursing. These are: size and character, teaching facilities, living and working conditions, standing and reputation, whether it is registered by the Board of Regents. The need of such a circular we know is great, from the letters which we are constantly receiving from young women all over the country, asking for information in regard to just such matters.

Everywhere, instructors in the nursing field are concerning themselves about the preliminary instruction for those pupils who are preparing themselves to enter schools of nursing. In the high schools of New York State, for instance, there are three types of courses

offered: Literary and Professional, Commercial, and Technical or Vocational. Members of the Genesee Valley League of Nursing Education in Rochester have been in conference with the superintendent of schools and some of the principals and supervisors, as a result of which an outline has been drawn up for a special course preparatory for entrance to schools of nursing. It is hoped that the approval of the Education Department at Albany may be obtained for this course and that it may be made a fourth one for high school students in Rochester who wish to select nursing as their future work. In making up this course, a selection was made of subjects being taught in the high schools at the present time, but they are rearranged. The committee was influenced to some extent by the prerequisite studies recommended by the Legislative Committee of the American Nurses' Association.

It was the opinion of one of the high school principals that the stumbling block to be overcome in inducing more young women to select nursing as their vocation, was the prejudice of their mothers, and that if talks could be given to mothers and girls together, much more could be accomplished. Members of the League are to speak to senior students in the grammar and high schools. Following these talks, groups of those who are most interested will be conducted through some one of the hospitals of the city and given a more definite idea of what the life there would be.

It is a curious coincidence that during this period when the League and the school authorities in Rochester have been in conference, an address on similar lines on The Education of the Nurse was given by Dr. Arthur H. Harrington of Howard, Rhode Island, to the graduating class of the Medfield State Hospital of Harding, Mass. To show how the same ideas are working in many minds, we quote from his address as follows:

With the thought in mind that it might be a practical suggestion to educational directors to introduce into high schools a course related to training schools for nurses, I have examined the curricula of a large number of representative high schools in various states, including Massachusetts. There seems to be in general in high school courses, particularly with electives which are offered, the requirements of a science course so that it would seem that a preliminary education looking towards the training schools for nurses might be arranged without that degree of differentiation which would cause complication in the high school courses. Let such studies or course be designated and known as preliminary to the vocation of nursing and attention thus aroused, and I believe that we would see more young women remaining through the high school course and subsequently entering upon training.

* * * Might not a discussion between educators on the one hand, and leaders who are interested in maintaining the educational standards of our training schools on the other, be profitable in bringing about a concise presentation of the dependence of training schools upon high schools, and showing in what way the directors of high schools might aid in the preparation of the future pupil of the training school."

CHINA'S NEED OF HIGHLY TRAINED NURSES

Dr. Harold Balme, superintendent of the Shantung Christian University Hospital, Tsinan, China, in a paper on *The Birth of the Nursing Profession in China*, which was recently sent us and which we note has since appeared in *The Canadian Nurse*, makes a very effective appeal to nurses to make their life work in that field. We cannot do better than quote the first and the last two paragraphs, with regret that space does not permit us to give the intervening ones which so clearly trace the history of nursing in that country and particularly in the Shantung Christian University Hospital:

Among the many dramatic changes which are taking place in China to-day it is difficult to find any which combines more encouraging elements than the birth of the new Nursing Profession; and, apart from the immediate claims of the war, it would be difficult to find, in any part of the world, so interesting a challenge and an appeal to highly-trained nurses in America which this movement embodies. It is not too much to say that the nurses who will be in China within the next decade will have the moulding of the nursing profession and the forming of true nursing traditions in their hands. Is it possible to contemplate a life service more truly worth while, or one which will affect the happiness and comfort of a greater number of people?

The war, which is rightly claiming our first thought and attention today, will not last forever; and if there is one lesson which it is teaching us more than another, it is to think of our responsibility and opportunity in world terms, rather than confine ourselves within the limits of our own country. There are times in the history of every great nation when more can be accomplished in a single decade than is usually the case in a century, owing to the peculiar susceptibility of the more thoughtful people to receive impressions and create traditions at such a time. Such an hour has now struck in China with regard to nursing, and there is a tremendous call for nurses of the highest possible training (especially administrative training) and earnest Christian character to give themselves to this unique task. And future generations will never forget their service.

EFFORTS TO COMBAT TUBERCULOSIS

The National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis set aside the week of December 2-9, as Tuberculosis Week. Tuberculosis Sunday, either the 2nd or the 9th, to suit the convenience of individual groups, was observed in more than 100,000 churches and other religious organizations, by a discussion of the question, What Have the Churches to do with the Tuberculosis Problem? The Association had prepared for distribution a sermon on Indifference to Tuberculosis and a pamphlet on Your Tuberculosis War Problem; it also distributed a prayer for Tuberculosis Sunday written by Professor Walter Rauschenbusch of the Rochester Theological Seminary. This makes the eighth annual ob-

servance of the day, the need for which is strongly emphasized in the reports of the medical examiners of our drafted men.

Their statements show that sixty per cent of those called to the new United States Army have been rejected by the army doctors for physical unfitness. For tuberculosis alone, from one to six per cent have been exempted, which means a sharp revision upward of previous expert estimates of the prevalence of this disease. On this basis, at least 200,000 of these men will be found to be tuberculous. Most of these cases, the experts declare, would never have developed had the preliminary symptoms been discovered and treated in time.

With these facts in mind, as well as those secured from a recent survey of Framingham, Mass., where 1700 men, women and children were examined, of whom 82 per cent were found to be suffering from various disease conditions, the Association placed greater emphasis than ever before upon the need of a National Medical Examination Day, which this year was observed on December 6. The purpose of these periodic examinations is of course to discover various forms of disease in the incipient stage.

The Association has also enlisted children in its campaign to improve the public health. Friday, December 7, was known as Modern Health Crusade Day, and was observed in many of the schools of the country by the Modern Health Crusaders, an organization of children now 100,000 strong. The principal object of this organization is to develop the physical welfare of the children through the giving of definite health chores, at least forty of which must be performed each week. These chores include the washing of hands before each meal, the drinking of a glass of water before each meal and before retiring, the brushing of the teeth twice a day, the inhalation of ten deep, fresh-air breaths daily, the playing out of doors or with windows open one half hour daily, sleeping ten hours daily with windows open, the cultivation of regularity in all physical habits, and the checking up of the number of full baths each week. Modern Health Crusade Day was devoted this year to interesting the children in anti-tuberculosis and public health work.

Our object in giving all this detail is that nurses everywhere in their work with men, women and children, may take advantage of every opportunity to help combat this dread disease.